



19 February 2020

To: The House Committee Members on Committee on Finance
The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Re: Strong Support of HB 2254 HD1, Relating to Loan Repayment for Health Care Professionals

Hrg: Friday, February 21, 2020 at 1:30 PM at Capitol Room 308

The Hawaii Public Health Association is a group of over 600 community members, public health professionals and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. HPHA also serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

HPHA strongly supports HB 2254 HD1, which would appropriate funds to the department of health to fund the health care provider loan repayment program administered through the John A. Burns school of medicine to provide loan repayment for physicians, physician assistants, psychologists, nurse practitioners, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and nurses who agree to work in a federally-designated professional shortage area or in a geographic area of Hawaii found to be underserved.

The health care provider loan repayment program would help to address the shortage of health care providers in Hawaii. The annual report from the Hawaii Physician Workforce Assessment Project delivered to the 2020 legislature continues to report a physician shortage, especially in the primary care specialty. According to the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), Hawaii has a shortage of about 800 doctors and the shortage is particularly acute on the neighbor islands which adversely affects access to healthcare for those communities. Loan repayment is a strategy to recruit more health care providers who struggle with an average medical school debt for JABSOM graduates in 2018-2019 of \$187,113.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on important health issues affecting people in Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted,

Pedro Haro
President-Elect
Workforce Development Legislative Sub-Committee Chair
Hawaii Public Health Association